

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum

THE SITUATION IN VIETNAM

Information as of 1600
8 June 1966

PREPARED FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL
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ARMY and DOS review(s) completed.

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Approved For Release 2004/10/27 : CIA-RDP79T00826A000800260001-9

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HIGHLIGHTS

The situation in Hue has remained unchanged with Buddhist altars continuing to clog the main thoroughfares. Reported government plans, however, call for the battalions recently moved into the area from Da Nang to sweep Hue tomorrow, removing the roadblocks by force if necessary. Tri Quang, meanwhile, has embarked on a hunger strike to protest US support of the government, and moderate Buddhist leader Tam Chau in Saigon has reiterated a policy of nonviolent opposition to the regime.

I. The Military Situation in South Vietnam: US forces participating in Operation HAWTHORNE scored a decisive victory over possible elements of the North Vietnamese 24th Regiment (Para. 1). A Communist force attacked the American Advisory Team at My Tho yesterday, killing one American and wounding 33 others (Para. 2). The Viet Cong attacked the Vinh Long Airfield last night with mortar shells (Para. 3). Weekly review of South Vietnamese battle statistics (Para. 4). Operational status of major surface lines of communications (Para. 5).

II. Political Developments in South Vietnam: The Buddhists continue to block the streets of Hue with their altars, but loyal Saigon troops reportedly are scheduled to enter Hue tomorrow to remove them (Para. 1). Tri Quang has embarked on a hunger strike to last until the US withdraws support for Premier Ky and Chief of State Thieu (Para. 2). Buddhist Institute chairman Tam Chau in Saigon has repeated his policy of nonviolent opposition to the government (Para. 3). A change of military command in III Corps has been announced (Para. 4). The Ky government reportedly has begun study of the election law recommendations (Para. 5). The political situation in northernmost Quang Tri Province is reportedly deteriorating (Para. 6).

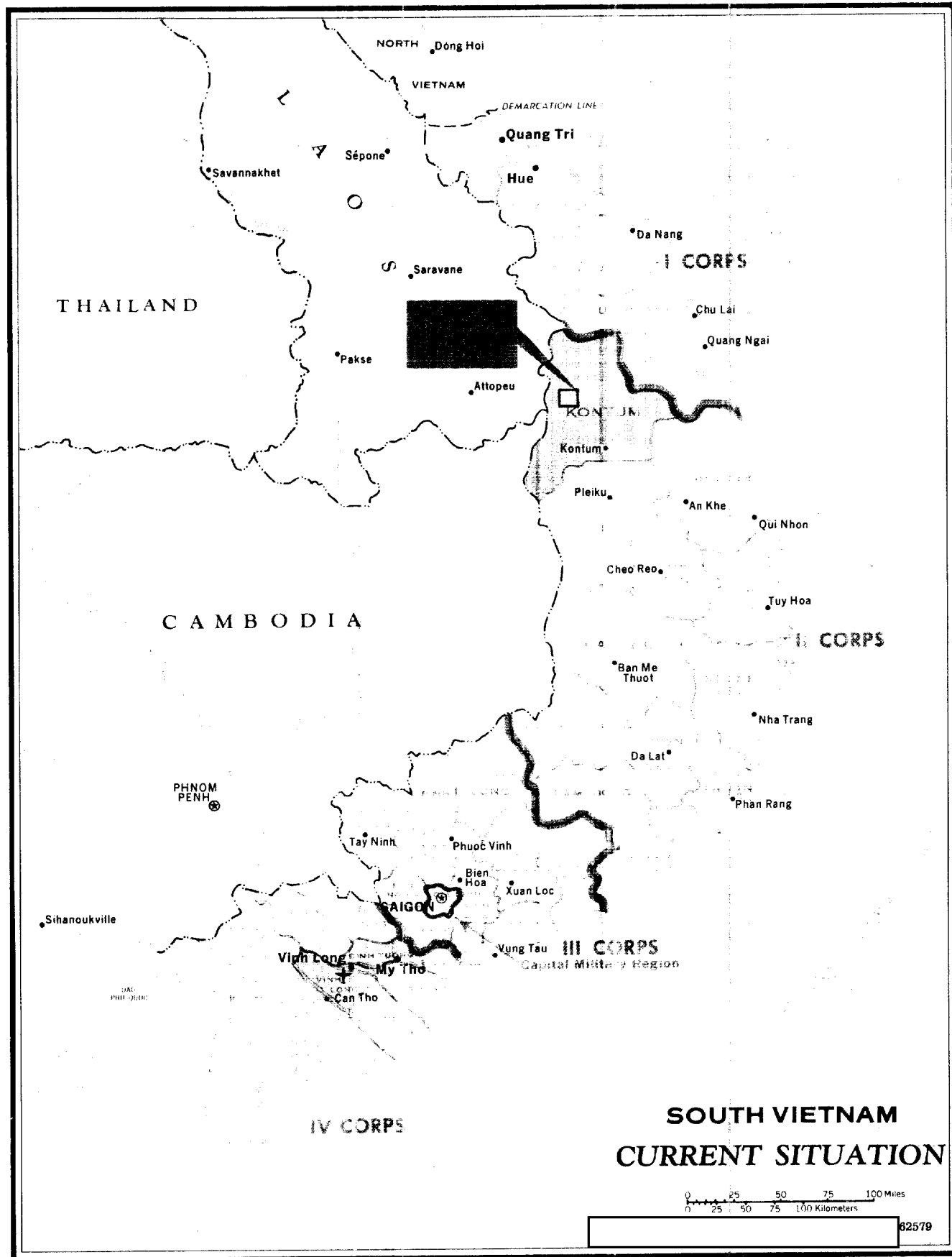
IV. Other Communist Military Developments:
There is nothing of significance to report.

V. Communist Political Developments:
French senior diplomat Jean Sainteny discussed his forthcoming trip, which may include a visit to Hanoi, with US Ambassador Bohlen (Paras. 1-2).

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I. THE MILITARY SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. Operation HAWTHORNE continues in western Kontum Province after elements of the US 101st Airborne Brigade engaged an estimated battalion-size force of Communist troops--possibly elements of the North Vietnamese 24th Regiment--in a two-day battle. Supported by tactical air strikes and armed helicopters, the US forces appear to have won a decisive victory over the Communist force. As many as 300 enemy troops have reportedly been killed in the action that at times developed into heavy hand-to-hand fighting. Early official reports of friendly casualties in the joint US/ARVN search-and-destroy operation indicate 14 Americans have been killed and 50 wounded.

2. Yesterday, a Communist force of unknown size attacked the American Advisory Team compound at My Tho in the Mekong Delta province of Dinh Tuong. The attack included mortar, recoilless rifle, machine gun, and small-arms fire. One American adviser was killed and 33 wounded. Two South Vietnamese soldiers were killed and 11 wounded. Enemy losses are unknown. A reaction operation was launched immediately after the attack but has not yet reported contact with the enemy force.

3. Elsewhere in the delta area, a Viet Cong force fired an undetermined number of heavy mortar rounds onto Vinh Long Airfield in Vinh Long Province last night. There were no casualties but two US helicopters were damaged.

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Weekly Review of South Vietnam Battle Statistics

4. The week of 28 May - 4 June compared with the previous week of 21-28 May:

I. Viet Cong Incidents

<u>Time Period</u>	<u>At-tacks</u>	<u>Regimental size</u>	<u>Battalion size</u>	<u>Company size</u>	<u>Ter-rorism</u>
21-28 May	13	0	5	2	639
28 May - 4 June	9	0	2	5	457

<u>Time Period</u>	<u>Sabotage</u>	<u>Propaganda</u>	<u>Anti-Aircraft</u>	<u>Total Incidents</u>
21-28 May	115	27	77	871
28 May - 4 June	88	16	121	691

II. Casualties

	<u>VC/PAVN</u>		<u>GVN</u>	
	<u>21-28 May</u>	<u>28 May-4 June</u>	<u>21-28 May</u>	<u>28 May-4 June</u>
Killed	1,173	902	240	121
Wounded	---	---	467	219
Missing/Captured	197	120	55	23
TOTALS	1,370	1,022	762	363

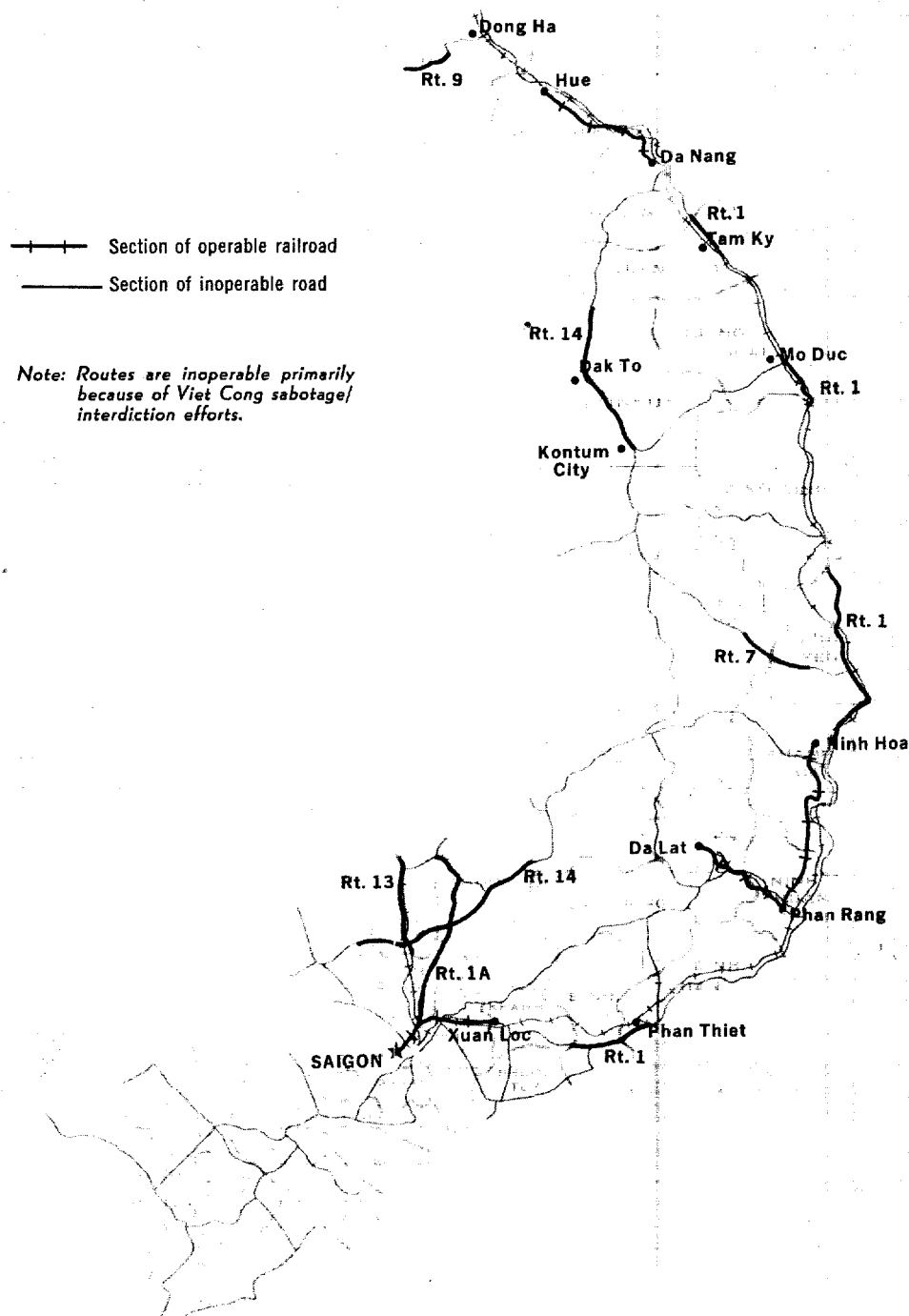
	<u>US</u>		<u>FREE WORLD</u>	
	<u>21-28 May</u>	<u>28 May-4 June</u>	<u>21-28 May</u>	<u>28 May-4 June</u>
Killed	87	109	3	14
Wounded	605	636	0	18
Missing/Captured	3	4	6	0
TOTALS	695	749	9	32

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CURRENT OPERATIONAL STATUS OF MAJOR TRANSPORTATION ROUTES AND COASTAL RAILROAD



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III. Weapons Captured

	<u>VC/PAVN</u>		<u>GVN</u>	
	<u>21-28 May</u>	<u>28 May-4 June</u>	<u>21-28 May</u>	<u>28 May-4 June</u>
Individual	286	313	222	38
Crew-served	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>0</u>
TOTALS	292	313	236	38

Operational Status of Major Surface Lines of Communications

5. The operational status of South Vietnam's major highways reflected little change during the period 28 May - 4 June. A section of Route 9 was closed again in western Quang Tri Province and Route 1 was reopened from Hue to Da Nang and from Dong Ha northward to the DMZ. Another portion of Route 1 in Quang Tin Province and a section of Route 14 in Kontum Province from Dak To to Kontum city were closed during the week. A section of the National Railway was opened during the week from Saigon to Xuan Loc.

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II. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM

1. There has been no change in the uneasy situation in Hue. Buddhist altars have continued to proliferate in the city's streets and so far none has been removed either voluntarily, forcibly, or through attempted persuasion. An unsuccessful government move to displace the altars today was to have involved a convoy of the 1st Division moving from Hue to Phu Bai on orders of I Corps commander General Lam. The convoy bogged down just outside of Hue, however, refusing to take action, and it is now adding to the road blockage. According to MACV, the newest government plan is to use the Vietnamese marine and airborne battalions just north of Phu Bai tomorrow in a movement into Hue to remove the altars by force if necessary. These troops will have orders to return fire if fired upon.

2. In the meantime, monk Tri Quang embarked on a hunger strike today in his Hue pagoda, declaring that he will continue his fast--reported to be water and juices but no solid foods--until President Johnson and Ambassador Lodge alter their policy of support for the Thieu-Ky government. Quang also has reiterated appeals, via his clandestine radio, for Buddhists to conduct a nonviolent resistance movement. The Buddhist radio also carried an appeal by the 1st Division Buddhist chaplain for troops not presently on active operations against the Viet Cong to sit down with their weapons, or pray at the nearest altar, when the government "attacks" on Hue begin. The appeal was allegedly issued on behalf of 1st Division commander General Nhuan.

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Saigon

3. Buddhist Institute chairman Tam Chau apparently received the press today in Saigon and repeated that the Buddhists would continue to struggle against Ky and Thieu, but in a nonviolent manner. Asked specifically if the Buddhists would boycott the forthcoming elections, Chau replied, according to the press, "If the government resigns, we will participate. If it remains in power, we have no confidence in it or in anything it does." The US Embassy reports that Chau and Yale-educated monk Quang Lien have asked for an appointment with Ambassador Lodge on 9 June.

4. According to MACV, the government has announced that III Corps commander General Tri is being replaced by present Saigon area commander General Khang. Tri is to become chief of political warfare, a position which would no longer entitle him to Directorate membership. Khang's successor in the capital area command, if any, is still unknown. The reason for this reshuffle is not yet clear. Both are advocates of a hard line toward the Buddhists, although Khang is more identified with Premier Ky and Tri with Chief of State Thieu.

5. Press stories today note that the government has begun study of the recommendations of the election law drafting council, which completed its work this weekend. Judging from the available embassy text of the council's proposals concerning the forthcoming constitutional assembly, the government will be required to do some further work on the matter since some aspects of the committee's draft seem incomplete. The council recommended that the constituent assembly have legislative powers--a suggestion unlikely to meet government favor. Whether the constituent assembly should evolve into a national legislature, however, was left to be determined by the constitution itself.

Quang Tri - Da Nang

6. [redacted] in
Quang Tri Province in I Corps--where the Buddhist

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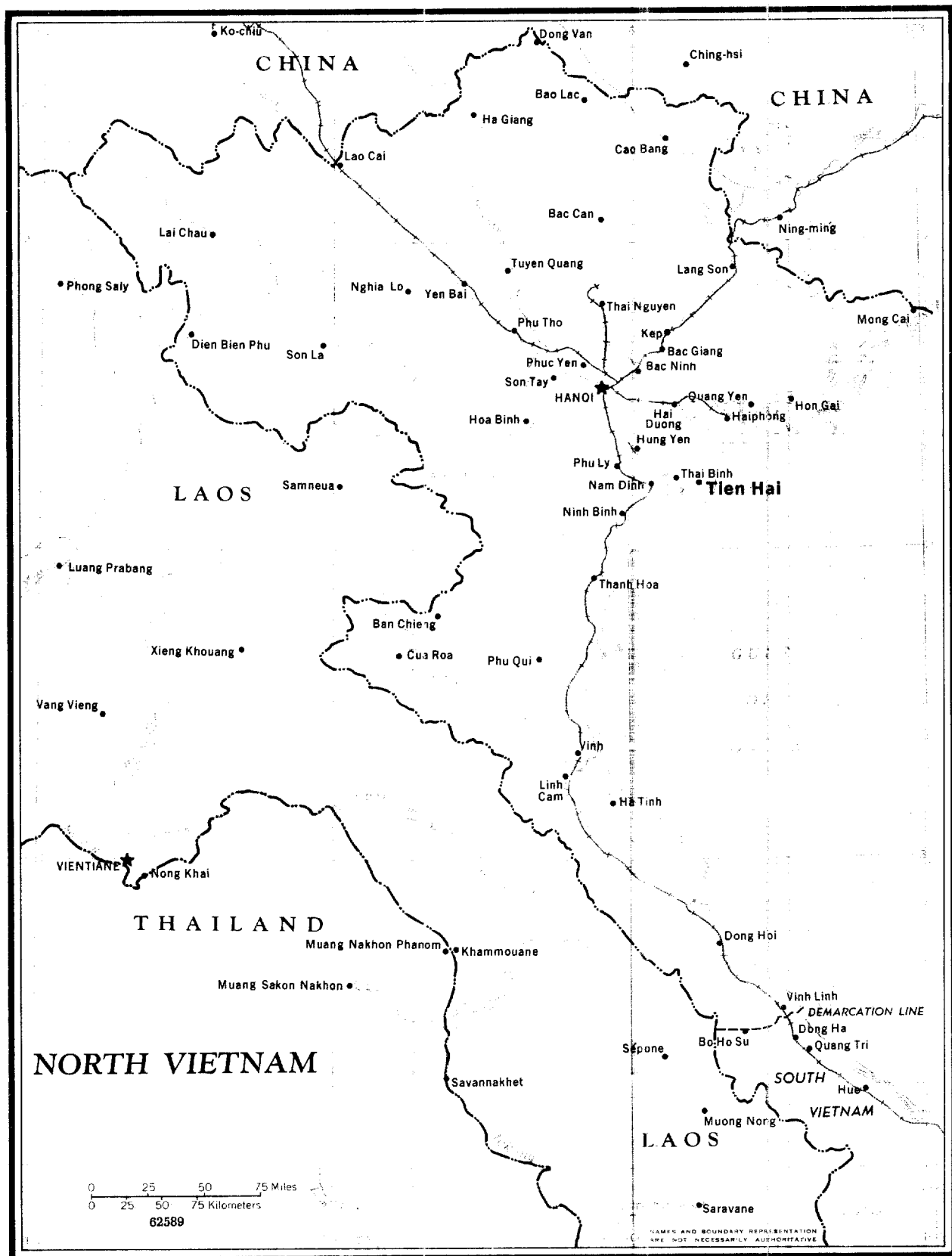


tactic of placing altars in the street was in evidence yesterday--is that the situation there, particularly in the province capital, is deteriorating. Buddhists have reportedly been easing Catholics out of influential positions, and the chief Buddhist monk appears to be in virtual control. Local Buddhists have also been making unjustified charges against Revolutionary Development teams for allegedly backing the Catholics. Latest reports from Da Nang, however, indicate a quieting of Buddhist non-violent obstructionism evident there yesterday.

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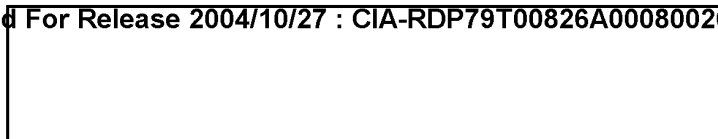
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IV. OTHER COMMUNIST MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS

1. There is nothing of significance to report.

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V. COMMUNIST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

1. Jean Sainteny, ex-cabinet minister and former French high commissioner in Hanoi, discussed with US Ambassador Bohlen on 7 June Sainteny's forthcoming trip to the Far East. Sainteny told the ambassador that his trip, which is scheduled to begin next week, was "unofficial" but revealed that he had discussed it at some length with De Gaulle. Bohlen received the impression that it is being financed by the French Government. Sainteny said that he planned to visit Moscow, Peking, Vientiane, and Phnom Penh but had not definitely scheduled a stop in Hanoi. He stated, however, that he would wait "for a reasonable time" in Peking for an invitation from Ho Chi Minh with whom he had had a close personal relationship while stationed in Hanoi and with whom he now hoped to have a "heart-to-heart talk."

2. Any discussion with North Vietnamese officials would presumably touch upon the subject of negotiating the war. Sainteny told Bohlen that De Gaulle still views the idea of serious negotiations as "premature," although he would be interested in the results of Sainteny's soundings. A similar trip by retired French Ambassador Jean Chauvel last year revealed no new facets of Hanoi's position on settling the war.

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